



U.S. Agency for International Development
Bamako, Mali

Country Strategic Plan

FY 2003 – 2012



REDUCING POVERTY AND
ACCELERATING ECONOMIC GROWTH
THROUGH PARTNERSHIPS

JULY 2002

Improved Quality of Basic Education Strategic Objective (SO7)

1. Development Challenge and USAID's Advantages

Mali is in the midst of an all-encompassing education reform and decentralization process. At the end of 1999, the GRM adopted an ambitious ten-year plan, PRODEC, as the blueprint for this effort; its goal is to achieve 95% gross enrollment in primary schools by 2008 (93% for girls) and universal primary enrollment by 2015. Through PRODEC, the Ministry of Education (MOE) seeks to decentralize decision-making, localize teacher training and professional development, and make communities more fiscally responsible for education. At the same time, the MOE has: begun development of a national curriculum for grades one through nine that is both competency-based and contextually relevant to the lives of students and their families; introduced an active learning methodology; and introduced a form of bilingual education that uses maternal languages in lower grades transitioning to French in upper grades. While the GRM and its financial/technical partners are committed to achieving the goals of PRODEC, the MOE faces limiting factors. Most notable are:

- severe teacher shortage, particularly female teachers;
- teachers untrained in the new curriculum and pedagogy;
- no policy for pre-service or in-service education;
- lack of space in existing schools or absence of classes;
- lack of strategies and actions that address poor female participation in school;
- low book:student ratio;
- limited information technology and ability to analyze data;
- heavy financial burden on rural communities that host community schools;
- per diem-funded workshops for training and other reform-oriented tasks;
- low level of female participation at the decentralized level;
- poor health status and health awareness of youth; and
- limited MOE financial and human resources, particularly in rural areas.
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These problems are more pronounced in rural areas and in the northern regions of Mali where poverty is greater, services are fewer and communities are more isolated.

Through PRODEC, the GRM has decided to change who is responsible for supporting, monitoring and managing education. This means that significant relationships need to be restructured. Resources need to be reorganized and redistributed, roles and responsibilities redefined, and new ways of doing business institutionalized through law and in practice.

While the challenges are great, the opportunities are many. Over the past five years, USAID has supported the construction and management of 1,658 community schools, significantly expanding access to primary education. These schools are now providing education for 14% of the Malian primary school population. Other financial/ technical partners are beginning to support establishment of community schools, and the GRM has begun to offer teacher support services to community schools and integrate these schools into the formal system as semi-autonomous entities. Still, USAID has a distinct comparative advantage: there is a large block of communities (with which USAID partners have been working) that are committed to providing education to their children; USAID and its partners understand the problems and needs of such communities (other donors have little experience in the sector); USAID-sponsored curriculum reform efforts are well underway; and USAID-sponsored programs are successful, with “tried-and-true” models and procedures in place. Partnerships with local non-governmental organizations (NGOs) have developed a network of service providers in education that are capable of training parent associations and school management committees in organization, management, school participation, community mobilization, and adult literacy with a particular eye towards female participation.

The MOE has established the decentralized structures for decision-making, the regional Directorates of Education (DAEs), and for teacher training and support, the pedagogical centers

(CAPs) and teacher training institutes. Additionally starting in 2003, the Ministry of Finance will provide certified accountants for each DAE offering the technical expertise necessary for the devolution of GRM funds. These new decentralized structures offer an opportunity, from the outset, to focus on female participation in the MOE as well as communities, in support of education for both girls and boys. Financial/technical partners, including USAID, have invested in infrastructure and equipment for these decentralized structures; while they are in the nascent stage, they are beginning to function. Other areas where USAID holds a comparative advantage in addressing limiting factors include: the use of radio through the 120 community radio stations established with USAID assistance throughout the country; curriculum and pedagogical assistance, based on U.S. experience; and integration of gender sensitive modules and life skills activities into the curriculum and into teacher training that are contextually relevant to the needs of students and their families, particularly in health and nutrition.

During the past five years the MOE, USAID and other financial/technical partners have centered on the expansion of the education system in order to achieve education for all. The PRODEC builds on that experience and highlights the risk of addressing expansion without a focus on quality. USAID's own experience through the community schools program demonstrates that simply addressing access will not lead to universal primary enrollment. Furthermore, universal primary enrollment will not ensure a more literate and numerate population, a key factor in economic and social development. Aside from the cost inefficiencies associated with poor quality of education (high drop-out and repetition rates), parents lose confidence in the effectiveness of education, weighing the opportunity costs of sending another child to school or allowing a child enrolled to complete the cycle; this has a particularly high impact on female participation. Moreover, the lack of female participation in primary schooling will result in not achieving universal primary enrollment.

2. Purpose and Definition

While access to education remains a problem, the greatest development challenge in Mali and the greatest impediment to achieving universal primary enrollment is the poor quality of education—from an inadequate infrastructure, poor pedagogic materials, lack of trained teachers, and to formal education's irrelevancy to the lives of boys and girls and their different learning needs. During the next ten years USAID/Mali will commit itself to implementing **Strategic Objective 7, Improved Quality of Basic Education**. SO7 will support the GRM's overall goal of universal primary education by 2015 in three ways: by increasing demand for education through improved, more relevant schooling to both girls and boys; by increasing the supply of school places through more efficient use of system resources (fewer drop-outs and less repetition due to increased quality); and by addressing the needs of both boys and girls through gender conscious curriculum and teacher training. As important, improving the quality of education will lead to a more literate and numerate population which has a positive impact on indicators of social and economic development.

There are four sets of ultimate customers of USAID assistance: the central level staff of the MOE working on curriculum and teacher training; regional staff of the DAEs and CAPs; teachers; and targeted communities (parents and students). With regard to the central level staff, USAID held a series of meetings with MOE officials. These meetings, in combination with USAID monthly participation in the thematic commissions for curriculum and teacher training held with key MOE staff and the financial/technical partners working in these areas, were key in the design of Intermediate Results (IRs) 1 and 2. Through regular field visits to monitor USAID-supported community schools, as well as touching base with DAE and CAP officials, USAID staff were able to collect feedback on current USAID programs and desired interventions during the next phase of USAID assistance. These field trips were important for the design of IRs 3 and 4.

Improving the quality of basic education for girls and boys was chosen as a strategic objective because a more literate and numerate population (particularly females) has a positive impact on almost all indicators of economic and social development. It was also chosen as a way of

expanding access to education and of supporting the GRM's goal of universal primary education by 2015. While expanding access to primary education is essential for achieving universal primary enrollment, focusing on access alone limits success in attaining a useful body of knowledge basic for overall development of the nation. Additionally, it must be acknowledged that improving quality is not generic among girls and boys. At every level of USAID assistance the learning needs of both girls and boys must be addressed.

One of the major decisions USAID made for the new strategy is to expand the regional focus of its assistance. Given the pre-eminence of decentralization within the PRODEC and the assistance of other financial/technical partners at the central level, USAID will focus most of its assistance, both technical and financial, at the decentralized level (with the notable exceptions of curriculum development and policy reform). During the 1995-2002 strategic period, USAID began support for decentralization and offered modest funds to the MOE for regional activities providing resources for decentralized decision-making and implementation. During the new Country Strategic Plan period, USAID will continue to provide financial resources to the regions for specific activities, while developing the capacity in the regions to manage the resources and make rational budget decisions. A partnership currently under development with the World Bank will create the basic financial system upon which USAID's education decentralization/regional focus will be based.

There are many aspects of improving the quality of education. USAID has made choices in its approach to achieving improved basic education for girls and boys, as evidenced by the intermediate results it expects to achieve in support of SO7. One major aspect of improved quality is the provision of teaching materials. In Mali the average book to student ratio is 1:3. USAID believes that Malian students would benefit from a higher book to student ratio; however, textbook production and distribution is expensive and best handled by the GRM. USAID does not have a comparative advantage in this area. In the current strategy, USAID provided a limited number of maternal language textbooks through Education for Development and Democracy Initiative funds; however, too few books were distributed to make a significant impact. Several other financial/technical partners, including the World Bank, are providing resources through a common basket to fund textbooks privately produced to MOE specifications.

By 2003, it is expected that in the targeted program areas schools will have been organized into school clusters (comprised of both public and community schools wherever possible). Through those school clusters, directors and teachers will start working with pedagogic advisors from CAPs. These advisors and cluster staff should be offering each other pedagogic and content-specific assistance and learning from classroom observations and teacher working groups to solve instructional problems leading to more effective teaching for both girls and boys. It is also expected that by mid-2003 that the MOE will have integrated their new curriculum for grades one through six into all Malian primary schools and will be administering a random sampling testing program to assess student achievement (monitoring progress toward better learning outcomes). In the area of parent and community participation, it is anticipated that communities will have taken on an increasing amount of the financial and administrative responsibility for running primary schools. They will have a greater sense of ownership and confidence in the formal education their children receive, leading to a greater demand for education of both girls and boys. With regard to the "Education Management Information System", it is anticipated that by start-up of implementation of, regional DAEs will be producing analytical reports with regard to student attendance and achievement, teacher development, and materials distribution that are used to assure that informed decisions are being made during yearly action and budget planning process.

All these results will lead to an improved quality of education for girls and boys as evidenced by progress in our SO-level indicators. As the major targets for measuring performance, these are the expected accomplishments (baseline figures are from 2000):

- seventh grade entrance exam pass rate is targeted to increase from 49% overall (girls 38%) to 62% overall (58% for girls) in 2007 and to 67% (64% for girls) in 2012;
- dropout rate is targeted to decline from 40% overall to 30% (36% for girls) in 2007 and to 25% (28% for girls) in 2012; and
- gross enrollment rate is targeted to increase from 61% overall (50% for girls) to 86% (66% for girls) by 2007 and to 100% (86% for girls).

3. Intermediate Results

Implementation of this SO will be through the four Intermediate Results discussed below.

a. IR 1: School-Based Teacher Training Improved

Improving the quality of teaching is essential to improving the quality basic education in Mali, particularly given the severe teacher shortage and lack of preparation to teach the new curriculum. While there are many aspects to improving the quality of teaching, USAID will focus on **improving school-based teacher training**. There are several reasons for this. First USAID has a comparative advantage in working at the local level; under the 1996-2003 strategy it trained over 1,600 communities in school management and recruitment of teachers, as well as trained teacher trainers and community schoolteachers—a substantial base from which to expand. Second, pre-service teacher education is costly and risky, given that there is no legal commitment on the part of teacher trainees to actually enter the classroom after training; attrition is a problem. Third, traditional in-service training is by its nature sporadic, expensive (with most costs going to per diem) and far from the realities of the classroom. Finally, there is greater opportunity for participation by female teachers, since female teachers have been less able to travel to traditional in-service training as it takes them too far from the responsibilities of family and home. USAID believes it can achieve the greatest impact with the fewest resources by assisting teacher training and support at the school-level. In addition, this level of assistance goes a long way in promoting the decentralization of teacher training.

Illustrative Activities:

- School clusters developed among community schools and public schools within 10 km
- CAP training for Pedagogic Advisors and School Directors in school-based in-service teacher training and support modules, in conjunction with the new gender appropriate curriculum and new pedagogy (using local languages)
- Teacher training at the school cluster level
- Radio education programs and study guides for teachers, targeting content of the new curriculum and aspects of PC, developed and transmitted
- Budgetary support to the decentralized level of the MOE (DAEs and CAPs) to finance in-service and short course pre-service training (Strategie Alternative de Recrutement du Personnel Enseignement (SARPE)—a precursor to school-based teacher education
- Budgetary support to the decentralized level of the MOE (DAEs and CAPs) to finance teacher-training materials

Key Indicators (to be reviewed and revised according to progress after year 3, all gender disaggregated):

- Number of school clusters created and supported among community and public schools
- Number of teachers reporting having a master teacher or other pedagogic resource available to consult during the academic year
- Number of teachers who report consulting with another teacher at least six times in the last academic year

b. IR 2: Relevant Curriculum for Grades 1-6 Established and Implemented

The GRM and USAID recognize that in order to improve the quality of basic education, not only must the quality of teaching improve, but the content of what is taught must also improve.

Establishing and implementing a new curriculum that is relevant to the lives of students and their families is an undertaking that requires technical expertise in curriculum writing, gender inclusion, life competencies as well as academic competencies, and, finally, financial resources. USAID brings a comparative advantage in this field as it can offer U.S. assistance on the cutting edge of competency-based curricula. While the French have committed some resources to curriculum development and assessment through 2004, Mali will benefit most, particularly in the area of curriculum development (a culturally-based endeavor), by pulling from each system and combining it with a uniquely Malian approach to create what will work best in the Malian context. The school-based teacher education in IR 1 will be directly linked to this new curriculum. USAID's assistance in both areas will help assure coordination and synergy between the new curriculum and its implementation in the field.

Illustrative Activities:

- Content area and pedagogical assistance to the MOE curriculum unit
- Assistance to MOE teacher training institutes and pedagogic centers in training of trainers for the new curriculum
- Radio education programs based on the new curriculum to be used in conjunction with classroom activities, but accessible to out-of-school children and parents in the community
- Budgetary support to the curriculum and teacher training units of the MOE to finance curriculum development, piloting and achievement testing activities for the new curriculum
- Assistance to the MOE to ensure effective links between curriculum development and teacher training during design, implementation and monitoring stages

Key Indicators (to be reviewed and revised according to progress after year 3):

- curriculum for grades 1-6 drafted with gender considerations assessed and incorporated
- generalized use of new curriculum for grades 1-2
- competency-based curriculum for grades 1-6 includes integrated activities in health, nutrition and life skills
- Achievement testing program based on the new curriculum developed and piloted

c. IR 3: Community and Parent Participation in Schools Increased

Improving the quality of education is also dependent on **increasing parent and community involvement in school**. This manifests itself in several ways. First, in order to do well in school, children must not only be enrolled, they need to be given the time to study outside of school. USAID's experience with community schools in Mali and in other countries has shown us that enrollment and attendance tend to be higher in schools where parents and communities are involved. Parents from community schools in Mali report a greater sense of ownership and confidence both in the teachers that they select and in the education those teachers are dispensing. Second, in order for children to do well in school, teachers must consistently be in school and attentive to their students. Malian parents who send their children to community schools report holding the teachers to a higher level of accountability, since it is the community and parents who employ the teachers, rather than the civil service. Teacher attendance is higher, strikes or the threat of strikes is not an issue and communities report that teachers regularly follow-up with students in their homes. This experience has led us to focus on community participation in both community and public schools. The activities under this IR will be directed at all the schools in the school clusters targeted by USAID.

Illustrative Activities:

- School management training of community schools and associated public schools in the school cluster (coordinated with the Democracy and Governance SO)
- Income generating activities training for communities that manage community schools (coordinated with the Accelerated Economic Growth SO)
- Leadership training for women and men
- Adult literacy classes, especially for school management committee (SMC) and parent association (APE) members, as a means of increasing parental interest and involvement in their children's education, targeting female participation
- Radio education programs that support literacy, general education and income generating activities targeted at communities that manage community schools

Key Indicators (to be reviewed and revised according to progress after year 3):

- Percentage of community schools receiving community support covering at least 30% of operating costs during the previous academic year
- Number of SMCs and APEs that meet at least ten times annually
- Percentage of female members participating in SMC or APE meetings
- Number of communities trained in literacy and other life-long learning skills

d. IR 4: Use of Education Management Information System (EMIS) Data Analysis for Decision-Making at the Regional Level Increased

Increasing the use of EMIS data analysis for quality decision-making at the regional level is essential for improving the quality of basic education for girls and boys. Since the Malian education system is in the process of decentralizing, the only way to make informed decisions on resource allocations for quality inputs—where teachers and schools are needed, how much training teachers have and will need, where instructional materials are needed, where teacher absenteeism is a problem due to health or other causes, whether the needs of boys and girls are being met—is through an operational EMIS and the ability to analyze data for use in activity planning and resource allocation decisions.

Illustrative Activities:

- Training of DAE and CAP directors in data collection and analysis for decision-making
- Data collection/analysis on HIV/AIDS impact with regard to student attendance and achievement, teacher attrition and absenteeism, and teacher development; health status of teachers; teacher recruitment and training; materials distribution and use, etc.
- Gender/geographic data analysis and training in its use for decision-making at the regional level
- Capacity building of the “Comités Régionaux de Concertation” (committees responsible for education action planning and monitoring in the regions) for decision making with regard to use of USAID and World Bank funds at the regional level
- Capacity building of the regional accountants in the management of MOE funds by accountants managing USAID and World Bank funding in the regions
- Budgetary support to the decentralized level for execution of EMIS data collection and analysis activities

Key Indicators (to be reviewed and revised according to progress after year 3):

- Number of DAEs capable of providing geographic and gender disaggregated data for the previous school year within three months of the end of the academic year
- Number of DAEs and CAPs that report data for decision-making at least 5 times annually

4. Contextual Assumptions

The Mission has identified several factors that may jeopardize the success of SO9. Among them the greatest threat is posed by economic shocks leading to diminished community resources or resource poor communities, since SO7 is focused on the community level with a dependence on community schools. Economic shocks include drought, decrease in world market prices for cotton or other export commodities, conflict in a neighboring country, etc. To address the problem of possible economic shocks, USAID will work with communities to identify a variety of income-generating activities that can be used to support schools. In terms of resource poor communities, USAID is commissioning an assessment of the current state of community schools and the impact of resources on enrollment and retention in school, particularly that of girls which continues to be lower in community schools, to determine appropriate models to address this risk.

Another risk having probable impact on SO7 is an insufficient tax base at the commune level due to poor tax revenue collection. The Democracy and Governance SO will be monitoring and working on this problem. While lack of political will to transfer authority and resources for decentralization is a potential risk for SO7, within the Ministry of Education (MOE) commitment to decentralization is currently high and devolution of authority is progressing. To mitigate the risk of resources not devolving to the regional level, USAID will give direct budgetary support to regional education offices to activities that relate to SO7's intermediate results. Following USAID's lead, both the World Bank and the Netherlands are directing a portion of their assistance at the decentralized level.

Another possible risk would be a change of government; if the new government lacks commitment to PRODEC, it is possible that USAID program activities will slow; however, given the nature of USAID education interventions and the popularity of community schools in Mali, the Mission believes this unlikely. Should activities be affected by such a change in government, USAID would work both at the central and regional levels of the MOE to amend activities to meet the new government's priorities.

A risk to the achievement of SO7 is the potential impact of HIV/AIDS on the teaching force. Given the current rate of infection in Mali (1.7%), this may not pose an immediate threat to SO7's success. However, the Mission recognizes the potential threat and intends to incorporate HIV/AIDS-related data collection in its EMIS activities with the MOE to establish a baseline and monitor teacher illness and attrition, as well as incorporate HIV/AIDS education in its teacher support activities.

Among the more likely risks is that of a student and/or teacher strike at the university or high school level. These strikes have occurred often in Mali's history. USAID will respond differently depending on the cause of the strike. If the strike is initiated by teachers, USAID will facilitate policy dialogue to address teacher concerns. If the strike is initiated by students, the causes are generally more political in nature and reach beyond the education system. These strikes tend to upset the normal operation of primary schools since out-of-school high school students try to distract primary school students and prevent them from entering school. It has been noted by many communities operating community schools that they are less susceptible to teacher strikes. Their teachers are not civil servants, not part of a union, and have stronger ties to the local community.

Finally, USAID recognizes that there is always the possibility of a decrease in the level of funding received from USAID/Washington. While this may not be likely in the immediate future given recent congressional interest in basic education, USAID would reduce the number of Intermediate Results (IRs) it expects to achieve commensurate with the decrease in level of funding, most likely eliminating the national level support to curriculum development, while continuing support to the decentralized offices of the MOE.

5. Linkages

a. Linkages within the SO

The four intermediate results within the Improved Quality of Basic Education SO form an integrated approach to improving quality. A better, more relevant curriculum means little without teachers trained in how to implement it. And better teaching in school does not go far to improve the quality of basic education if girls and boys are not attending school, prepared to learn, with the support of their parents and community. Unless parents are involved in their children's education and see its utility (a more relevant curriculum), they will not send their children to school and will not allow them to stay. Finally, in order to get the most out of quality inputs at the decentralized level, be it better-trained teachers, curriculum or materials, decentralized offices of the MOE need to make rational human and financial resource allocations based on reliable data analysis.

b. Linkages within Mission Strategy

USAID/Mali's goal is to overcome poverty and accelerate economic growth. Studies throughout the nineties have consistently shown that a more literate and numerate population, particularly female population, has a positive impact on indicators of economic growth and social welfare.

High Impact Health Services Increased (SO6): Necessary to school attendance and participation are healthy children and healthy families. Child vaccination and vitamin A supplementation, the promotion of insecticide treated bed nets and use of anti-malarials, and the promotion of oral rehydration all assist in the achievement of SO7 in two ways. Proper use will help ensure the active participation of children in school. Particularly for girls, healthier mothers and younger children lead to greater school attendance, since girls are regularly kept home from school to help take care of sick parents and siblings.

Shared Governance through Decentralization (SO8): SO8 is focused on decentralization. Since the bulk of assistance offered under SO7 is targeted at the decentralized offices of the MOE, communal and community participation in education, the education strategic objective will be working closely with SO8, as during the current strategy on civil society building activities with SMCs and APEs. In addition, SO7 will rely on the shared governance strategic objective to push forward the policy agenda on decentralization, particularly with regard to the devolution of budgetary control to the school system at the regional level.

Accelerated Economic Growth (SO9): During the previous strategy communities demonstrated a great commitment to financing and managing their own schools. Much enthusiasm and pride surrounded the construction of initial classrooms and the financial support of teachers, no matter how modest. However, community schools by definition are in remote rural communities, and these villages are populated by the poorest of the poor. The financial burden on these communities is excessive; the ability to sustain their schools without USAID support is questionable unless communities are able to generate income in support of their schools. During this strategy SO7 will ensure that training in income generating activities is part of any support given to community schools. The education SO will rely on the expertise and assistance of 9in offering this support.

Communications for Development (SO10): Since three of SO7's intermediate results include use of some form of radio education, the education strategic objective will look to SpO10for technical expertise and assistance. Further, given SO7's emphasis on meeting the needs of both boys and girls, as well as men and women, the education strategic objective will rely on SpO10to expand women's and girls' access to radios and to meet gender specific needs in radio programming.

c. Conformance with Donor and GRM Programs

The USAID program will be implemented in close collaboration with the MOE at both the central and regional levels. In addition USAID will continue to work closely with the financial/technical partners in implementation and financing through monthly technical meetings ("Commissions

Thematiques”) in each of the areas in which USAID will offer assistance. Signed in September 2001, the Education Sector Investment Program (PISE) to which USAID is a party, defines the technical and financial commitments of all stakeholders in education, including the MOE. The current PISE is effective until 2004, after which PISE II will be put into place. Every six months the PISE is extensively reviewed through a joint monitoring and evaluation mission of all financial/technical partners and the MOE to assess progress to date, identify key problems and develop joint solutions. USAID has played and will continue to play a leadership role in the management and monitoring of PISE. The Mission believes its leadership can be enhanced and impact increased through possible use of non-project assistance (NPA), which could leverage policy reform and implementation with regard to decentralization and in support of PRODEC and its PISE. In the coming year the Mission will investigate different models of non-project assistance to determine an optimal mix of budgetary support conditioned against policy reform.

Other financial/technical partners have been encouraged by USAID’s support for decentralization; the World Bank and the Netherlands have also decided to offer some financial support to the regions, rather than the central MOE. USAID is in the process of developing a partnership with the World Bank and the Netherlands in the management, accounting and reporting of these funds.

Limited Food For Peace (FFP) resources are expected to be available to the World Food Program for school feeding programs here in Mali. As these resources will help to increase girl’s participation in school, enhance the quality of primary education, and increase overall enrollment, these activities will definitely contribute to the achievements of SO7. Therefore, they are in keeping with the overall objectives of the CSP.

6. Instruments

Community and Public School Management: Implementation of community school/public school financial and management strengthening activities will be conducted by U.S. NGOs in conjunction with Malian NGO partners. Capacity building of local NGOs’ ability to operate independently in the sector will be stressed. An Annual Program Statement or Request For Assistance for soliciting assistance will be issued to cover each region of operation.

Central and Decentralized MOE Technical Support: To provide technical assistance in curriculum, teacher training, and support, as well as EMIS/decentralization, USAID will solicit and choose an institutional contractor through issuance of a Request For Proposal. To provide assistance in radio education programming and guides, USAID anticipates using instruments provided through the G/EGAT/HCD Office. Also, long-term training may be provided in instances where crucial expertise is not available locally in education areas directly related to implementation of some aspect of SO7.

Budgetary Support for Decentralization: Implementation of budgetary support of MOE activities, decided upon at the decentralized level, will be carried out through the MOE and portions might be done through Non-Project Assistance. Contracted accountants will be responsible for transparent accounting of USAID funds and accounting of World Bank funds at the decentralized level, and the transfer of capacity to newly hired MOE accountants. These accountants will be managed by USAID and paid for from the SOAG as part of a joint financing arrangement with the World Bank.

Non-Project Assistance: Non-Project Assistance (NPA) may be an effective instrument in leveraging major policy reform in decentralization, textbook manufacture and distribution and government support of community and commune schools, providing assistance to Mali for such decentralized activities as expanded teacher training programs, provision of textbooks for faculty and students, and school equipment. This will depend on whether USAID, along with other technical and financial partners and the MOE, can articulate a rational program of conditions based on policy reform/implementation and in line with the current education sector investment plan. Also it depends on whether the MOE demonstrates improving capacity and willingness to

operate at the decentralized level and if USAID obtains sufficient resources to make a significant impact. During FY 2003 USAID/Mali will pursue this possibility.



